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Bush Quits CIA Post

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

George Bush announced yesterday that he will step down as head of the Central Intelligence Agency Jan. 20 when Jimmy Carter is sworn in as President.

The 52-year-old Bush, a former Texas congressman and once Republican national chairman, promised "continuing full assistance" to President-elect Carter during the transition period prior to Inauguration Day.

Bush gave no indication of his future plans. The CIA director's three-sentence announcement added only that he had informed President Ford and Carter of his decision.

Bush's impending departure was announced just five days after a lengthy, six-hour meeting with Carter in Plains, Ga., to brief the President-elect on the agency's secrets, sources and methods.

The meeting had evidently gone so well it led to speculation that Bush might have been encouraged to remain as CIA chief. A CIA spokesman indicated yesterday, however, that Bush notified the former Georgia governor then, and perhaps even earlier, of his plans to leave.

Carter has given no hint of whom he might name as a successor to Bush, but the CIA director's Jan. 20 timetable would mean that the CIA will be headed, for several weeks at least, by an acting director. The Senate must confirm appointment of a permanent director.

Under the terms of President Ford's executive order restructuring the em-



GEORGE BUSH

... resignation effective Jan. 20

battled intelligence community last February, Bush has delegated much of the daily responsibility for running the CIA to his deputy director, E. Henry Knoche, a 23-year agency veteran steeped in intelligence analysis.

The provision was designed to give Bush more time to devote to his role of supervising the entire U.S. intelligence community as director of central intelligence (DCI).

After an 18-month investigation of CIA misdeeds, the Senate intelligence committee recommended last April that the two jobs be split up by statute, removing the DCI from direct management of the CIA so that there could be no conflict of interest with his broader responsibility and at the same time increasing the accountability of the CIA by giving it a director with no other duties.

A gregarious, amiable Republican loyalist, Bush had been ambassador to the United Nations in 1971-72, and then took over as GOP national chairman from Kansas Sen. Bob Dole just as the Watergate scandal was unraveling. He was serving as head of the U.S. Liaison Mission to the People's Republic of China last year when Ford abruptly dismissed CIA Director William Colby and nominated Bush as his successor.

The Texan's partisan credentials stirred fierce Democratic opposition in the Senate, particularly when President Ford declined to rule Bush out

as a possible vice presidential running mate. The nomination was cleared by the Senate Armed Services Committee last December only after Ford relented in a letter to Chairman John C. Stennis (D-Miss.).

Bush, who acknowledged that he hoped to return to political life one day, took over the CIA last January after a 64-to-27 confirmation vote on the Senate floor. Faced with the task of rebuilding confidence in the agency, he declared at his swearing-in ceremony that "no politics, no policy bias" would color its collective judgment.

Despite the initial misgivings, Senate sources said yesterday that Bush was considered to have done a remarkable job in taking charge at the CIA and working well with Congress. "He allayed a lot of Democratic apprehensions," one source said. "Generally, he got good marks."

Except for the creation of a permanent Senate oversight committee, the legislative reforms recommended as a result of congressional investigations of the past two years have yet to be acted upon.

The CIA, meanwhile, is hoping to reduce the number of House and Senate committees to whom it must report "in timely fashion" its covert operations. By September, Bush was saying publicly that he felt the CIA had "weathered the storm" of congressional investigation.